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Title : Regarding plight of mid-day meal workers in the Country.

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY (SABARKANTHA) : Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards the plight of thousands of mid-day meal workers who are working in different school establishments preparing meal for the school children. Since many years the persons who are running the mid-day meal scheme are getting Rs. 500, the cook is getting Rs. 250/- and the cleaner is getting a sum of Rs. 125/-. Their wages have not been revised for more than 10 years. Many of the State Governments, like Tamil Nadu and Gujarat, were running this scheme before the Central Government began supporting this scheme. Recently the wages of the *Anganwadi* workers have been increased to Rs. 500/- in many of the States. Day before yesterday I requested the Union Government to pay their increased salary along with their dues from the month of April onwards. Since now the wages of the Anganwadi workers have been increased, I demand that the wages for the mid-day meal workers, who prepare meals for school children should also be doubled, that is, those who are getting Rs. 500/- , it should be enhanced to Rs. 1000/-, those getting Rs. 250/-, their wages should be enhanced to Rs. 500/- and those getting Rs. 125/-, their wages should be enhanced to Rs. 250/-.

Sir, one more point that I would like to raise is that the hon. Finance Minister has made a statement here that the total amount involved in loan waiver is Rs. 65,000/-. It may be about Rs. 71,000/- crore. I understand that there is still Rs. 6,000/- crore left with the Government and it should have gone as loan waiver.

[R146]

~~(w4/1945/ru-asa)~~

I suggest to the Government that the Mid-Day Meal workers in this country should be given a wage rise or their remuneration should be increased. Using this amount, since it is lying safely with the Government, the wages of workers may be increased. It may not be an increase of more than Rs. 1000 crore at the most for the entire country.

I request the Union Government to look at this issue sympathetically and see to it that the Mid-Day Meal workers in the country get an increased remuneration. In fact, they should be immediately, or as early as possible, given this wage increase.